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A NOTICE
OF
The Pinkneys.

CHARLESTON:
PRINTED BY EVANS & COGSWELL.
3 Broad and 103 East Bay Streets.
1860.

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Duke University Library

Pinchney, Maria Henrietta

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The public lives of the Generals PINCKNEY are well known to their families, but with their early years, and the lives of those who preceded them, they are unacquainted. This Notice is, therefore, intended for their descendants.

MARIA HENRIETTA PINCKNEY.



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THOMAS PINCKNEY, the grand-father of the Generals PINCKNEY, was the first of the name in Carolina. He came over in the year 1692. His wife was Mary, daughter of Charles Cotesworth; his three sons were Thomas, who died young, Charles, commonly known by the name of Chief Justice PINCKNEY, and William.

THOMAS PINCKNEY was a man of independent fortune, and resided on the Bay, in a house which afterwards belonged to General THOMAS PINCKNEY. An anecdote is told of him, that, looking out on the Bay, which was not then disfigured by wharves or long rows of store houses, he observed a vessel, just arrived from the West Indies, landing her passengers; and, as they walked up the street, he was particularly attracted by the appearance of a very handsome stranger, gaily dressed, and turning to his wife, remarked: "That handsome West Indian will marry some poor fellow's widow, break her heart, and ruin her children." His words were in part prophetic, for, dying shortly after, his widow married the gay West Indian, George Evans, and though he did not break her heart, as she lived to marry a third husband, he often gave her the heartache by his extravagance, and squandering the patrimony of her children; a sufficiency, however, was saved to enable them to have a liberal education.

Chief Justice PINCKNEY was educated in England, and married there Elizabeth, daughter of Captain Lamb, of Devonshire Square, London. He returned to Carolina and practised law; was made Chief Justice of the Province and King's Counsellor. Having made an am-

ple fortune by his profession, as is seen by the rent roll in his own hand writing, and, having been many years married without children, he took his brother William's eldest son, Charles, to live with him, intending to make him his heir. In the year 1763, Eliza Lucas, daughter of George Lucas, a Colonel in the British Army, and Governor of Antigua, came shortly after her arrival from England, on a tour of pleasure with some friends to Carolina. The young stranger attracted universal attention, but by none was she more admired than by the wife of Chief Justice PINCKNEY, who declared that, rather than Miss Lucas should return to Antigua, she would herself step out of the way and let her take her place, which kind intention she actually executed, dying the following year, and, at no distant time, Chief Justice PINCKNEY married the lady his wife was so solicitous should succeed her.

Eliza Lucas had been sent very young to England, for her education, her father having a great dislike to the manner in which the ladies of the West Indies were educated, passing a great part of their time in needle work, their minds were, consequently, vacant and uninformed; he had a great aversion to the sight of a needle, and used to say he never saw women at work, but he imagined they were plotting mischief. So ungallant a supposition would not have been adverted to by one of his descendants, but to show that it was partly owing to this circumstance that the fine mind of his daughter was so highly cultivated. In compliance with her father's wishes, she never engaged in any of the feminine accomplishments of the needle, but spent the greatest part of her time in reading; and, as there

were no reviews in those days, to save the labor of thinking, to be well informed, it was necessary to read deeply and think for oneself. She had no knowledge of Latin, except the Latin grammar, which she had learnt as a foundation for grammar in general; but she was well versed in the French language and its literature, and spoke it correctly and fluently. She had been taught music, as it was an accomplishment as indispensable at that day as it is now. But as she did not possess the organ of tune, she was not a proficient in it, and amused herself in gardening, planting out trees, and agriculture. It was from her experiments in tropical plants, that Carolina was indebted for one of its staples in 1768. She was eminently pious, strongly attached to her own Church, that of England, but her understanding made her tolerant of others. She did not consider religion as distinct from morality, but, as it was the source of her motives, it influenced all her actions. Had she lived at a period when benevolent societies and all the other philanthropic societies were the fashion, she would not have supposed that a strict attention to these and the mere outward forms of religion, would have entitled her to the name of Christian, had she not exhibited the fruits of Christianity by her self-control, forgetfulness of self, charity towards others, and humility of deportment. No spurious Christianity found favor in her sight. She was a constant attendant on Church, and she, at stated times, gave a public testimony of her having embraced the faith of Christ, by partaking of the Eucharist; but she did not commune every month. She always obliged the young people of her family to recollect the text of the sermon they had heard at Church, and search for it

in the Bible as soon as they came home, when she explained to them those parts they did not understand, or had forgotten: she also made them learn by heart the Collect for the day, which they considered a great task: but she never imposed on them a Jewish Sabbath.

Addison's beautiful hymn on Gratitude,

"When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,"

was a great favorite of hers; she used frequently to make them repeat it, dwelling on these lines,

"Nor is the least a cheerful heart,
That tastes those gifts with joy."

She did not believe that a moderate participation in the recreations and amusements of civilized society was contrary to the precepts or spirit of the Gospel, that the relinquishing of the ball-room, or the drama, was a proof of the spirituality of any one's state; or that there were more dangers to be resisted in these than amidst the temptations, business scenes, and every-day trials of life. She always spoke with pleasure of the gaities in which she had participated during her second visit to England; of the celebrated actors and actresses she had seen, and mentioned that she had never missed a single play when Garrick was to act. Respected, admired, at the head of society in Carolina, all that she thought, and said, and did, was right. But this generation is wise in its own conceit, and Eliza Lucas, with all her acquirements, virtues and unaffected piety, might now be regarded as a light not sufficiently bright for the illumination of the times.

The happiness of Chief Justice PINCKNEY was completed by the birth of a son, which put an end to the

hopes of his nephew, Charles. But though it put an end to his hopes, it did not diminish his affection for his uncle, or his love for his young cousin, whom he always treated like a younger brother. Nor did his uncle remit his care and attention to him; he kept him in the family, educated him for the law, and sent him to England for five years for the completion of his education. The Generals PINCKNEY and their sister were accustomed to speak of him with great affection, always designating him by the title of "my cousin." He was the father of CHARLES PINCKNEY, one of the framers of the Constitution.

Chief Justice PINCKNEY had four children: Charles Cotesworth, born on the 25th February, 1746; George Lucas, who, his father said, died of a clean room, his nurse choosing to wash the floor, when he was only a fortnight old; Harriott, afterwards wife of Daniel Horry, and Thomas, born on the 22d October, 1750. It may be imagined that a child so ardently wished for as was CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY, by such parents, would have not only every care and attention bestowed on his health, but unremitting pains taken with his education. Accordingly, he knew his letters before he could speak—that is, if the letter were named, he was asked to point it out, he immediately put his finger on it. But he never, in after life, approved of such precocious accomplishments, and used to dissuade all those with whom he had any influence, from the premature instruction of their children, saying that from an over-anxiety to make him a clever fellow he had run the risk of being a very stupid one. Of that firmness of character which he exhibited through life, he gave an instance when only three years old, in suffering himself to be whipped rather than betray

a little companion. Of his strict regard for truth, several childish anecdotes are told before he was seven years old, at which age his father carried him, with his mother, sister and brother, then only three years old, to England, in the year 1753.

On going to England, Chief Justice PINCKNEY rented what he called his Mansion House, on the Bay, to Mr. Glen, who was then Governor of the Province; and from that time, and during the minority of his son, it was the residence of all the Provincial Governors.

Chief Justice PINCKNEY resided, while in England, at a house he purchased in Surrey, called Ripley. On account of the war between France and England, he returned, with his wife and daughter, to Carolina, in 1758, leaving his two sons at Westminster School, the one being twelve, the other eight years old. He was taken ill immediately on his coming home, and died in a short time, leaving directions that his sons should have the most liberal education. His will is most explicit on this point; "if," it runs, "if from the uncertainty of the crops, the income should be inadequate, part of the estate may be sold, always reserving Pinckney Island."

General PINCKNEY had a most exalted opinion of his father, not from his recollection, as he was only twelve years old when he last saw him, but from the reflections and notes, in his own hand writing, that he had found dispersed through his books. Those books are no longer in being. At the commencement of the war between England and the colonies, the greatest part of the library, the papers of consequence, and every thing that was valuable in the family was sent to Ashpoo, to a place belonging to General THOMAS PINCKNEY, supposing it

sufficiently remote to be out of danger, but the house was at length burnt, with every thing in it, except what had been plundered and carried off; the only memorial, therefore, of Chief Justice PINCKNEY, is his last will, which, in the language of one fully competent to judge, "will be read with delight by the patriot, the philanthropist, the parent and the Christian."* Such was the fascination of his manner, as described by his wife, that the moment his footstep was heard, before he entered the drawing room, every eye glistened with expectation and pleasure. He was idolized by her; and a nervous illness of many months followed her bereavement; but she at length remembered she was a mother, and roused herself to direct the education of her absent sons, and devote herself to that of her daughter. And never did daughter more fully repay the thousand cares bestowed on her. She was every thing the fondest parent could hope or desire. Nor were her anxieties for her sons unrewarded. She was constantly informed of the progress they were making in classical attainments. The strict discipline of Westminster could not fail to bring forth every intellectual power. She had herself planted the seeds of religion and virtue in their hearts, and her friend, Mrs. Evans, under whose guardianship they were placed, did not spoil them. The penances this lady prescribed were rather uncommon—there was one she imposed on General PINCKNEY that he never forgot. She obliged him to sit down and unpick a quilted silk petticoat, which gave him as great an aversion to a pin as his grandfather had to a needle.

There was also another friend who interested himself

* The late Bishop Gadsden.

for them—George Keate, a literary man of fine taste, author of “The Pelew Islands.” Of this gentleman their mother thus writes to her eldest son: “Had there been any thing wanting to convince me of his friendship and kind remembrance of your dear father, the trouble he has taken, his so kindly interesting himself in those most dear to me, and his last long and friendly letter would be a sufficient proof.”

CHARLES and THOMAS PINCKNEY passed regularly through Westminster, with great honor to themselves, not only on account of their attainments, but also for the strictness of their principles. The elder brother, in accordance with his seniority, preceded the younger by four years at Oxford; he entered Christ Church College, and was placed under the care of Cycil Jackson, who was his private tutor—a man of profound learning, who was afterwards the Dean of Christ Church. At Oxford he pursued his studies with great zeal, and quitted it at the age of eighteen, with the reputation of an accomplished scholar.

This was an early age to leave the University in England, but he had been qualified to enter it sooner than young men in general, from his assiduity while at Westminster. From Oxford he entered the Society of the Middle Temple,* and here also he was indefatigable in study, as may be seen by the following letter from his mother: “I am alarmed, my dear child, with an account of your being extremely thin, it is said, owing to intense study, and I apprehend your constitution may be hurt,

* It is a matter of too much interest to be forgotten, that General PINCKNEY attended the lectures of Blackstone, and took notes of the whole course. The volume containing these is carefully preserved.

which affects me very much, conscious as I am how much and how often I have urged you from your childhood to a close application to your studies. But how short-sighted are poor mortals! Should I, by my over-solicitude for your passing through life with every advantage, have been the means of injuring your constitution, and depriving you of that invaluable blessing, health. How shall I answer to myself the hurting a child so truly dear to me, and deservedly so, having lived to near twenty-three years of age without having once offended me. Let me beg of you, my dear Charles, for my sake as well as your own, and that of your near connexions, to take care of yourself, and consider how small will be the advantage of learning where health is wanting."

General PINCKNEY spent the last year he remained in Europe at the Royal Military Academy at Caen in Normandy, and in travelling on the Continent. His brother pursued the same course of studies, a severe illness while at Oxford obliged him to suspend them for a short time. A letter from his mother shews not only her anxiety for his health, but also for the suspension of his collegiate course "It was with extreme concern my dear child that I heard of your illness, though I was very apprehensive of it from your long silence, not having heard from you since the arrival of your brother until your letter by Lady Mary Ainslie.* Of your going to France, you may be assured I approve, as it was necessary for your health and you had the approbation of my good friends on your side of the water, though I cannot help regretting that necessity, particularly at this time, as it must take you from your studies, and six months'

* Afterwards Lady Mary Middleton.

loss of application now must be of consequence. As you are in France you may perhaps be inclined to see more of the Continent but I hope you will not think of gratifying that inclination at present. I therefore beg of you my dear child, to return to Oxford, as soon as your health will permit, and apply closely to your studies."

Mrs. PINCKNEY's elder son, after his visit to the Continent, was admitted to the Bar in 1769, and returned to Carolina the same year, his mother having previously requested him to choose a good ship and commander, but not to inform her of either, or exactly the time of his leaving England, as her ignorance would save her much anxiety. The younger having completed his collegiate education, studied law at the Temple, and returned in 1772, one having been sixteen, the other nineteen years absent from their country, and eleven and fourteen years absent from their mother, who always declared that her sons were a living contradiction to the opinion that the affection of children was weakened by absence, and well was she rewarded for the sacrifices she had made for their advantages, for her every wish was a command to her sons.

As General PINCKNEY was seven years old when he went to England, he had some recollection of his country; he remembered the pleasure with which his father had pointed out to him the first wagon that had arrived in Charleston from the interior, saying, "Charles, by the time you are a man, there will be at least twenty wagons coming to town," and when in after life he met in travelling a long line of wagons, he would remark, "how happy my father would have been in the growth and prosperity of Carolina," and, notwithstanding their long

absence from her soil never had she two sons more devoted to her than were the Generals PINCKNEY. They had participated in all the indignation felt at home at the passing of the Stamp Act—a portrait taken soon after of General PINCKNEY for his friend, Sir Matthew Ridley, represents him as arguing vehemently upon that arbitrary Act—the brothers returned to their country with all the ardor of young men, ready to promote her best interests and die in her cause. The sentiments of the elder brother are expressed in the following extracts written after the capitulation of Charleston, in 1780.

To his wife he writes, “Our friend Philip Neyle, one of General Moultrie’s aids, was killed by a cannon ball coming through one of the embrasures, but I do not pity him for he has died nobly in defence of his country. but I pity his aged father, now unhappily bereaved of his beloved and only child.”

To his brother-in-law and bosom friend Mr. Edward Rutledge, the youngest of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, on the question whether if he was set at liberty, he would rejoin the American army, “You my dear Ned may be assured that I will not do anything, however I may be oppressed, at which my friends may blush. If I had a vein that did not beat with love for my country, I myself would open it. If I had a drop of blood that could flow dishonorably, I myself would let it out. Whenever asked the question you mention, I will give it an answer becoming an American officer, a man of honor, and a devotee to the Freedom and Independence of his country.”

To Major Money, a British officer, who was interested for him when a prisoner: “I entered into this cause

after reflection and through principle. My heart is altogether American, and neither severity nor favor, nor poverty, nor affluence, can ever induce me to swerve from it."

To Captain McMahon, another British officer: "The freedom and independence of my country, are the gods of my idolatry. I mean to rejoin the American army as soon after my exchange as I possibly can. I will exert my ability to the utmost in the cause I am engaged in, and to obtain success, I will attempt every measure that is not cruel or dishonorable."

Such were the sentiments of General PINCKNEY, which were re-echoed by his brother, who was his exact counterpart in strictness of principle, firmness of character, purity of motive, and undaunted courage. But here the resemblance ceased. They were dissimilar in temper and manner; the disposition of the elder brother was warm, with occasional ebullitions, but generous, frank, cheerful, so perfectly alive to the ludicrous, that he frequently infringed on the Chesterfield code of politeness by a hearty laugh, and jocular with children and young persons, who never felt any constraint in his presence.

The disposition of the younger brother was mild and placid, with so much self-control, that he at times appeared to strangers cold and unimpassioned, but his heart was as warm as that of his brother, and he would equally have made any sacrifice for a friend. He had a keen perception of real wit, which is said never to cause any thing more than a smile; nor was he insensible to humor and pleasantry. With those with whom he was intimate, he was even sportive; his epistolary style was frequently so when addressed to them. Two short notes, written

when nearly eighty, will give some idea of the playfulness of his manner:

“We are impatiently expecting you, my dear nieces, at Eldorado. The fatted calf is ready, the turkeys have had the run of the barn yard, the pigs are wallowing in rice flour and potatoes, and the wild ducks abound in the river. You see, therefore, we are prepared for the immensity of your appetites; but the best treat you shall have, will be the accounts you will receive of your friends in Charleston.”

To Mrs. Horry.

“My Dear Sister :

I find that old age has a remarkable effect on my memory, strengthening it in some cases, and nearly obliterating it in others. For instance—if any body owes me money, (an occurrence, which though rare, sometimes happens) I never forget a single cent of it; but if I am the debtor, it totally escapes my recollection. I do, however, happen to remember, that when you were last at Santee, you procured some articles for me from Charleston, or paid money for me in some way or other. This, therefore, comes to request you to inform me how this debt accrued, and what is its amount; and as I have some money by me, you may chance to receive you own before an act of oblivion has finally passed.”

The elder General PINCKNEY always said that his brother's natural talents were superior to his own, but that he had not indulged so much in study. General Thomas PINCKNEY excelled his brother in knowledge of the Greek. He had always, when a boy, been at the

head of his class, which was no small praise at such a seminary as Westminster. His thorough acquaintance with Greek gave him an advantage that many Christians do not possess, it enabled him to have a profound knowledge of the Scriptures, which cannot be obtained by the English version.

The elder General PINCKNEY was deeply read in theology. In arguing on disputed points he not only knew the strongest arguments on his own side, but would point out to his antagonist where to find those on the opposite. This was often a source of surprise to clergymen of a different persuasion. It is doubtful whether there was ever a more constant and general reader; nothing in the shape of a book escaped him; a child's book, a cookery book, or an old almanac. He read from the moment he arose, that is, a page or a few sentences at a time, while he walked about and made his toilet,—locomotion, it is said, is conducive to thought. He did not, however, read without method. Until two o'clock in the day his reflective faculties were exercised; after that hour, works of imagination, poetry, novels, plays, (unless he was engaged with company), occupied him till he retired to rest. This appropriation of his time continued to the very last. Botany and chemistry he studied as an amusement. While in France he had attended the lectures of Charles and Fourcroy. Both the brothers, after their retirement from public life, employed themselves and took great pleasure in agriculture.

General PINCKNEY was twice married. His first wife, the mother of his three daughters, was Sarah, third daughter of Henry Middleton, second President of Congress, and son of Arthur Middleton, second royal Governor of Caro-

lina. His second wife was Mary, daughter of Benjamin Stead, and descendant of Sir Nathaniel Johnson, one of the Proprietary Governors of Carolina.

General THOMAS PINCKNEY was also twice married. His first wife, the mother of his surviving children, was Elizabeth, daughter of Jacob and Rebecca Motte, who will long be remembered as the heroine most distinguished among the daughters of Carolina. His second wife was Frances, widow of John Middleton, nephew of Sir William Middleton, who, at an early age, crossed the Atlantic to battle for his country.

Of the Generals PINCKNEY, it may be said, they were patriots among patriots; and they were equally distinguished as good men, for they had early pressed to their hearts the sweet peace of believing and the needful supports of a religious trust.

This
Notice has
been privately printed for
Harriott Pinckney,
at Charleston,
1860.

